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ABSTRACT

Brief, impromptu essays written for the 1990 administration of the College Board's English Composition Test (ECT) were randomly sampled for four groups of examinees. These essays were subjected to further holistic ratings beyond those conducted for the ECT, and analytical ratings were also obtained. The holistic scores were correlated with the analytical scores to determine which essay characteristics were most closely associated with high holistic scores. Results indicated that overall organization, use of supporting materials, noteworthy ideas, rhetorical strategy, and the thesis statement were the strongest correlates. Comparisons with the results of a study of 1979 essays on a different topic showed that the same characteristics were associated with high scores in that administration. These characteristics correlated strongly with high holistic scores for all subgroups and for males and females. Other factors associated with higher scores, studied only in 1990, were completion of the task, use of a standard essay format, use of literary references, and proficiency in the English language. Certain types of content were also associated with higher scores. Four appendixes present the essay topic, the rating form and instructions, supplementary ratings, and selected examples. (Contains 15 tables and 6 references.) (Author/SLD)

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Factors in Performance on Brief, Impromptu Essay Examinations

HUNTER M. BRELAND, MARILYN W. BONNER, and MELVIN Y. KUBOTA

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The College Board
Educational Excellence for *All* Students

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Factors in Performance on Brief, Impromptu Essay Examinations

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College Entrance Examination Board, New York, 1995

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Abstract

Brief, impromptu essays written for the 1990 administration of the College Board's English Composition Test (ECT) were randomly sampled for four different groups of examinees. These essays were subjected to further holistic ratings beyond those conducted for the ECT administration, and analytical ratings were also obtained. The holistic scores were correlated with the analytical scores to determine which essay characteristics were most closely associated with high holistic scores. The results indicated that overall organization, use of supporting materials, noteworthy ideas, rhetorical strategy, and thesis statement were the strongest correlates. Comparisons with the results of a previous study of 1979 ECT essays, written on a different topic, showed that these same characteristics were also most closely associated with high holistic scores in that study. These characteristics correlated strongly with high holistic scores for all subgroups randomly sampled, and for males and females.

Additional factors associated with better holistic scores but studied only for the 1990 topic included following instructions, completion of the task, use of a standard essay format, use of literary references, and proficiency in the English language.

Certain types of essay content were also associated with higher scores on the 1990 topic. Essays combining current affairs with literature and history or combining literature and history received slightly higher scores on average than essays based only on current affairs, literature, history, or personal experience. Nevertheless, some essays receiving high scores were based solely on personal experience, did not contain literary references, and did not use a standard essay format. The analyses suggest that some practice with this type of brief, impromptu essay, particularly under strict time constraints, may be useful as preparation for taking such essay examinations.

Introduction

Previous research has identified some characteristics that relate to performance on brief, impromptu essays (Breland & Jones, 1982; Breland & Lytle, 1990), but this research has been far from thorough. The increasing interest in performance testing, which often translates into essay testing, has been accompanied by increasing interest in identifying the characteristics of essays that are viewed positively and negatively by the readers who score them. What do teachers of English believe to be good practice in the writing of brief, impromptu essays? Are desirable practices for these kinds of essays the same as for writing more generally? What information should be provided to teachers and students to enable them to optimally prepare for brief, impromptu essay tests? Should special information be provided to members of ethnic minority groups or to women?

Partial answers to some of these questions have been provided by previous research. Breland and Jones (1982) examined samples of essays written for the December 1979 administration of the English Composition Test (ECT). From the 85,542 essays written at that administration, random samples of 200 were drawn from each of the following groups: African American/black students, Hispanic students with English as their best language, Hispanic students who reported that English was *not* their best language, and white students. The black and white student samples were restricted to students who reported that English was their best language.

In the 1982 study, Educational Testing Service (ETS) humanities test development staff, with assistance from outside consultants who were experienced readers of ECT essays, developed a list of 20 characteristics considered important in evaluating brief, impromptu essays. A group of experienced English teachers rated the sampled essays with respect to each of the 20 characteristics, with two teachers rating each essay independently. Both positive and negative characteristics were rated. The ratings obtained were then correlated with holistic scores assigned by a different set of readers during the regular scoring of the ECT.

The correlational analyses showed that the five most important correlates of high holistic scores were overall organization (r = .73), use of supporting materials (r = .71), noteworthy ideas (r = .70), rhetorical strategy (r = .66), statement of thesis (r = .64), and paragraphing and transition (r = .57) (see Table 15, page 13).

A number of comparisons of group differences were also made in the Breland and Jones (1982) study. In order of importance, the strongest correlates with high holistic scores for each group were as follows: black sample: overall organization, statement of thesis, rhetorical strategy, and use of supporting materials; Hispanic (English first language) sample: use of supporting materials, overall organization, rhetorical strategy, statement of thesis, and noteworthy ideas; Hispanic (English *not* first language) sample: overall organization, range of vocabulary, subject/verb agreement, statement of thesis, and rhetorical strategy; and white sample: overall organization, use of supporting materials, noteworthy ideas, rhetorical strategy, and statement of thesis. These comparisons suggest that while all

four groups tended to exhibit similar problems in their writing, the Hispanic (English not first language) group had special problems relating to language proficiency.

Another approach to determining what characteristics of brief essays relate to high holistic scores is to conduct computer analyses of the essays. Breland and Lytle (1990) conducted such analyses of one of the essays included in a Breland, Camp, Jones, Morris, and Rock (1987) study. This was an expository essay of the type used on the ECT, but 45 minutes was allowed for writing instead of only 20 minutes as on the ECT. The computer analysis "flagged" specific attributes of students' writing: passive verbs, "to be" verbs, subject-verb disagreements, "fuzzy" words, run-on sentences, dangling participles, spelling errors, capitalization errors, and punctuation errors. The number of flags for each attribute was divided by the word count for the essay to develop an error rate for each attribute. These error rates were then correlated with the holistic score for the essay. The correlations (in parentheses) were as follows: passive verbs (.15), "to be" verbs (.00), subject-verb disagreements (–.26), fuzzy words (–.07), run-on sentences (–.16), dangling participles (–.29), spelling errors (–.25), capitalization errors (–.04), and punctuation errors (.00).

The zero or non-negative correlations suggest either that the computer analyses were imperfect in detecting such errors or that these errors did not significantly influence the scoring of the essays sampled. Both the rating procedures used in the Breland and Jones (1982) study and the computer analyses used in the Breland and Lytle (1990) study indicate that some useful lessons can be derived from such analyses that may be of interest to teachers who have the task not only of teaching students how to write in general but also of providing guidance on how to write for specific types of examinations that their students may be required to take.

The purpose of the present investigation was to examine some of the same essay characteristics studied previously, as well as to look at additional factors, to determine what advice might be offered to teachers and examinees about essay writing practices.

Method

Sampling

Following the data collection design used in the Breland and Jones (1982) study, stratified random samples of 100 each of African American/black, Hispanic, Asian American, and white students were drawn from the examinees who sat for the December 1990 administration of the ECT.

Instrument

The essay topic and instructions for the 1990 ECT with essay are reproduced in Appendix A.

Data Collection Procedures

Essay scores and SAT-verbal (SAT-V), TSWE (Test of Standard Written English), ECT Objective, and ECT Reported scores were obtained from program files for the cases sampled. A special analytical reading of the same essay responses was conducted using the rating form and the instructions shown in Appendix B. A holistic score on a scale from 1 (low) to 6 (high), the same scale used in the original essay scoring, was obtained for each essay using the rating form along with 22 analytical variables scored on a scale from 1 (low) to 5 (high). Two readers, working independently following train-ing, completed the rating form. Of the 15 readers engaged, 9 were female and 6 male.

In addition to the ratings done using the Appendix B form and instructions, a further set of supplementary ratings of the essays was completed by an English teacher, not among the 15 readers who used the Appendix B form and instructions, working as an individual consultant to the project (see Appendix C). Included in these additional ratings were the appearance of each essay (neatness, legibility, etc.), the number of paragraphs used, whether paragraphs were properly indented, and other information not obtained in the original analytical ratings.

Analyses

Means and standard deviations were computed for each variable, for each of the four groups randomly sampled, for males and females, and for the samples combined. The mean difference between white/Asian American, white/black, white/Hispanic, and male/female groups was computed for each variable. Correlation coefficients were computed between the total holistic essay score (the original programmatic holistic score obtained for the Admissions Testing Program (ATP) program administration of the test plus the special holistic score obtained in this study) and all continuous variables for each group.

Mean differences were computed for a number of dichotomous variables developed from the supplemen-

tary ratings (e.g., Were instructions followed? Was the essay completed? Did the writer have a language problem? Were literary references used? Were paragraphs properly indented?). Mean differences were also computed for a number of categorical variables developed from the supplementary ratings (e.g., essay content, essay type, political orientation of the writer, handwriting style). Multiple regression analyses were conducted to determine which variables contributed most in the prediction of the total holistic score.

Computer analyses of the sample essays were conducted using Writer's Workbench software (Cherry, 1981), and the variables derived from these analyses were correlated with the total holistic score.

Finally, three types of exemplary essays were identified: (1) essays with the highest total holistic scores, (2) essays with substantially higher total holistic scores than predicted by the regressions, and (3) essays with substantially lower total holistic scores than predicted by the regressions. These exemplars were examined to determine what factors might have been particularly important in scoring these special cases.

Results and Discussion

Mean Differences for Gender and Ethnic Groups

The means for all variables developed, and for each group analyzed, are shown in Table 1. Standard deviations are presented in Table 2. The Table 1 means for SAT-V show that all groups were somewhat above average in verbal skills. The SAT-V average score for all college-bound seniors in 1990 was 424, with males averaging 429 and females 419 (College Board, 1991). Thus the male average of 481 in the present sample was 52 points above the male college-bound senior average for 1990, and the female average of 495 was 76 points higher than the female college-bound senior average for 1990. The Asian American sample (with an average of 491) was 67 points above the national college-bound senior average, the black sample (with an average of 474) was 50 points above the national average, the Hispanic sample (with an average of 460) was 36 points above the national average, and the white sample (with an average of 529) was 105 points above the national average.

The mean differences between males and females, and between whites and ethnic minorities, are shown in Table 3. The gender differences all favored females

TABLE 1

Means for Gender and Ethnic Groups

Variable	*Male*	*Female*	*Asian American*	*Black*	*Hispanic*	*White*
Cases	187	213	100	100	100	100
Test Scores						
SAT-V	481	495	491	474	460	529
TSWE	45.8	49.2	46.0	47.6	45.4	51.5
ECT Objective	26.7	30.2	27.3	27.5	24.9	34.6
ECT Essay	6.73	7.42	6.95	6.75	7.02	7.66
ECT Reported	464	498	472	468	459	529
Rescored ECT essay	6.65	7.01	6.82	6.41	6.65	7.49
Essay total	13.4	14.4	13.8	13.2	13.7	15.2
Reader Ratings						
Thesis	6.59	6.55	6.58	6.31	6.31	7.07
Rhetorical strategy	5.89	5.98	5.92	5.73	5.81	6.29
Noteworthy ideas	5.95	6.00	6.27	5.58	5.72	6.33
Support	6.29	6.52	6.51	6.10	6.21	6.82
Transition	5.78	6.07	5.71	5.63	6.02	6.37
Tone	6.15	6.24	6.38	5.97	5.93	6.51
Sentence variety	5.75	5.97	5.94	5.75	5.75	6.04
Sentence logic	5.41	5.64	5.55	5.34	5.41	5.84
Organization	5.75	5.99	5.80	5.52	5.69	6.49
Paragraphing	5.90	5.93	6.09	5.63	6.06	5.89
Development	5.43	5.64	5.47	5.27	5.46	5.97
Conclusion	5.51	5.73	5.78	5.27	5.41	6.04
Subject/verb	5.96	6.05	5.73	6.10	5.97	6.22
Pronoun usage	5.90	5.91	5.85	5.95	5.81	6.01
Parallel structure	5.98	6.02	6.04	5.97	5.98	6.01
Active/passive	6.05	5.98	6.04	5.89	6.03	6.09
Idiomatic usage	5.59	5.65	5.58	5.69	5.55	5.66
Punctuation	6.04	5.92	5.98	5.96	5.94	6.03
Vocabulary	5.87	5.90	6.12	5.72	5.67	6.04
Diction (level)	5.94	5.93	6.18	5.77	5.70	6.09
Diction (precision)	5.29	5.36	5.47	5.26	5.03	5.55
Language	5.78	5.81	5.90	5.68	5.69	5.92
Spelling	5.82	5.78	5.93	5.82	5.66	5.77
Supplementary Ratings						
Neatness	2.94	3.08	3.01	2.96	2.95	3.15
Legibility	2.87	3.22	3.02	3.00	3.07	3.13
Counts						
Words	214	242	231	215	222	250
Paragraphs	2.93	3.09	3.13	2.80	3.00	3.13
Pages	.94	1.13	1.04	.94	1.06	1.14

and were highest for TSWE, the ECT Essay score, and the ECT Reported score. Essays written by female students were also rated higher on neatness and legibility, and they contained more words, on average, than essays written by male students. The ratings of specific essay characteristics did not yield any statistically significant gender differences, but it is of interest

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TABLE 2

Standard Deviations for Gender and Ethnic Groups

Variable	Male	Female	Asian American	Black	His-panic	White	Total
Test Scores							
SAT-V	119	109	132	96	110	102	114
TSWE	10.2	8.0	10.6	8.4	9.4	7.1	9.2
ECT Objective	12.8	12.8	12.5	11.7	12.8	12.6	12.9
ECT Essay	2.14	1.81	2.08	2.03	1.90	1.89	2.00
ECT Reported	103	95.2	99.5	89.4	102	95	100
Rescored ECT essay	2.18	1.90	2.16	1.85	1.89	2.11	2.00
Essay total	3.97	3.37	3.94	3.45	3.45	3.68	3.70
Reader Ratings							
Thesis	1.58	1.50	1.52	1.53	1.28	1.68	1.54
Rhetorical strategy	1.37	1.32	1.45	1.08	1.24	1.51	1.34
Noteworthy ideas	1.83	1.66	1.85	1.52	1.67	1.78	1.74
Support	1.92	1.79	1.94	1.74	1.75	1.92	1.85
Transition	1.68	1.46	1.72	1.51	1.39	1.56	1.57
Tone	1.25	1.30	1.29	1.17	1.22	1.34	1.23
Sentence variety	1.26	1.39	1.34	1.23	1.40	1.36	1.34
Sentence logic	1.41	1.39	1.44	1.36	1.31	1.45	1.40
Organization	1.69	1.61	1.69	1.59	1.62	1.55	1.65
Paragraphing	1.60	1.51	1.54	1.48	1.44	1.72	1.56
Development	1.45	1.29	1.47	1.34	1.22	1.35	1.37
Conclusion	1.76	1.62	1.48	1.76	1.49	1.89	1.70
Subject/verb	1.16	1.00	1.33	.89	.89	1.08	1.08
Pronoun usage	.92	.94	.98	.90	.87	.97	.93
Parallel structure	.66	.67	.75	.59	.59	.72	.66
Active/passive	.58	.57	.60	.65	.44	.59	.58
Idiomatic usage	.95	.89	1.08	.88	.86	.84	.92
Punctuation	.99	.87	1.02	.88	.81	1.00	.93
Vocabulary	1.48	1.42	1.50	1.26	1.48	1.47	1.44
Diction (level)	1.53	1.47	1.55	1.46	1.47	1.45	1.50
Diction (precision)	1.52	1.58	1.64	1.56	1.52	1.46	1.55
Language	.75	.82	.73	.85	.79	.76	.79
Spelling	.80	.69	.73	.52	.81	.85	.74
Supplementary Ratings							
Neatness	.59	.62	.66	.57	.58	.59	.60
Legibility	.54	.52	.65	.51	.54	.52	.56
Counts							
Words	74.2	72.3	67.1	67.1	68.9	81.5	74.4
Paragraphs	1.16	1.17	1.10	1.14	1.17	1.24	1.17
Pages	.34	.39	.34	.35	.45	.35	.38

that most of the ratings appeared to favor female students.

All test score differences between white and ethnic minority groups were statistically significant and favored white examinees. The largest effect sizes (differences in standard deviation units) occurred between the white and Hispanic samples, where the greatest differences occurred for TSWE, the ECT Objective score, and the ECT Reported score. Effect sizes less than .20 are considered to be "small," however, regardless of their statistical significance (Cohen & Cohen, 1983).

Of the ratings, the largest effect sizes occurred for organization (for all three ethnic minority groups). Asian examinees averaged lower ratings than white examinees on thesis statement, transition, organization, development, and subject/verb agreement. Black examinees averaged lower than white examinees on thesis statement, rhetorical strategy, noteworthy ideas, support, transition, tone, sentence logic, organization, development conclusion, active/passive voice, and language. Hispanic examinees averaged lower ratings than white examinees on thesis statement, rhetorical strategy, noteworthy ideas, support, tone, sentence logic, organization, development, conclusion, precision of diction, and language. Black and Hispanic examinees averaged lower ratings on neatness and number of words written.

Correlations

Table 4 presents correlations between total holistic essay scores and the other variables. For both males and females, the highest correlations occurred for organization (.74 and .73, respectively), followed closely by number of words written (.72 and .71, respectively). Other variables that correlated highly with total holistic scores for males and females included support, noteworthy ideas, thesis statement, rhetorical strategy, transition, tone, sentence logic, paragraphing, development, and precision of diction.

The correlations by ethnic group differed more than those by gender. The strongest correlates with total essay scores for Asian American examinees were organization (.71), number of words written (.70), transition (.70), noteworthy ideas (.69), support (.69), thesis statement (.68), and rhetorical strategy (.67). For black examinees, the strongest correlates were number of words written (.69), support (.68), organization (.66), transition (.61), conclusion (.57) and noteworthy ideas (.56). For Hispanic examinees, the strongest correlates were organization (.74), number of words written (.74), support (.66), transition (.66), precision of diction (.62), and paragraphing (.60). Total holistic scores for white examinees correlated most highly with organization (.77), support, (.75), transition (.74), noteworthy ideas (.73), number of words written (.73), development (.71), conclusion (.70), thesis statement (.69), and

TABLE 3

Mean Differences for Gender and Ethnic Groups

	Gender Differences		*Ethnic Differences*					
			Asian American		*Black*		*Hispanic*	
Variable	*M–F*	*ES*	*W–A*	*ES*	*W–B*	*ES*	*W–H*	*ES*
Test Scores								
SAT-V	–.14	–.13	.38	.33*	.55	.65**	.69	.65**
TSWE	–3.4	–.37**	5.5	.62**	3.9	.51**	6.1	.74**
ECT Objective	–3.5	–.27*	7.2	.58**	7.1	.58**	9.6	.76**
ECT Essay	–.69	–.34**	.71	.36*	.91	.46*	.64	.34*
ECT Reported	–.34	–.34**	56.6	.58**	60.4	.65**	69.2	.70**
Rescored ECT essay	–.36	–.18	.67	.31*	1.08	.55**	.84	.42**
Essay total	–1.0	–.29**	1.38	.36*	1.99	.56**	1.48	.42**
Reader Ratings								
Thesis	.04	.03	.49	.31*	.76	.24**	.76	.51**
Rhetorical strategy	–.09	–.07	.37	.23	.56	.43**	.48	.26*
Noteworthy ideas	–.05	–.02	.06	.03	.75	.45**	.61	.35*
Support	–.23	–.12	.31	.16	.72	.39*	.61	.33*
Transition	–.29	–.18	.66	.40**	.74	.48**	.35	.24
Tone	–.09	–.07	.13	.10	.54	.43**	.58	.45**
Sentence variety	–.22	–.16	.10	.07	.29	.22	.29	.21
Sentence logic	–.23	–.16	.29	.20	.50	.35*	.43	.31*
Organization	–.24	–.14	.69	.62**	.97	.62**	.80	.50**
Paragraphing	–.03	–.02	–.20	–.12	.26	.16	–.17	–.11
Development	–.21	–.16	.50	.35	.70	.52**	.51	.40*
Conclusion	–.22	–.13	.26	.15	.77	.42**	.63	.37*
Subject/verb	–.09	–.08	.49	.41**	.12	.12	.25	.25
Pronoun usage	–.01	–.00	.16	.16	.06	.06	.20	.22
Parallel structure	–.04	–.06	–.03	–.04	.04	.06	.03	.05
Active/passive	.07	.12	.05	.08	.20	.32*	.06	.12
Idiomatic usage	–.06	–.06	.08	.08	.03	.03	.11	.13
Punctuation	.12	.13	.05	.05	.07	.07	.09	.10
Vocabulary	–.03	–.02	–.08	–.05	.32	.24	.37	.25
Diction (level)	.01	.00	–.09	–.06	.32	.22	.39	.26
Diction (precision)	–.07	–.04	.08	.05	.29	.19	.52	.35*
Language	–.03	–.04	.02	.03	.24	.30*	.23	.30*
Spelling	.04	.05	–.16	.20	–.05	–.07	.11	.13
Supplementary Ratings								
Neatness	–.14	–.23*	.14	.22	.19	.33*	.20	.34*
Legibility	–.35	–.66**	.11	.19	.13	.22	.06	.11
Counts								
Words	–28	–.38**	19.2	.26	35.1	.45**	28	.38*
Paragraphs	–.16	–.14	.00	.00	.33	.28*	.13	.11
Pages	–.19	–.52	.10	.29*	.20	.57**	.08	.20

*$p<.05$; **$p<.01$

Abbreviations: M–F = Male minus Female, W–A = White minus Asian, W–B = White minus Black, W–H = White minus Hispanic, ES = Effect Size.

TABLE 4

Correlations with Total Essay Scores

Variable	*Male*	*Female*	*Asian American*	*Black*	*Hispanic*	*White*
*Test Scores**						
SAT-V	.59	.49	.61	.41	.61	.44
TSWE	.48	.42	.57	.20	.49	.51
ECT Objective	.49	.44	.48	.32	.62	.37
Reader Ratings						
Thesis	.63	.60	.68	.46	.51	.69
Rhetorical strategy	.58	.62	.67	.43	.50	.69
Noteworthy ideas	.67	.65	.69	.56	.59	.73
Support	.71	.69	.69	.68	.66	.75
Transition	.54	.64	.70	.61	.66	.74
Tone	.54	.56	.51	.45	.57	.60
Sentence variety	.56	.46	.56	.42	.49	.54
Sentence logic	.61	.51	.59	.45	.54	.61
Organization	.74	.73	.71	.66	.74	.77
Paragraphing	.60	.52	.61	.50	.60	.56
Development	.64	.58	.61	.59	.59	.71
Conclusion	.46	.63	.56	.57	.55	.70
Subject/verb	.37	.31	.54	.39	.15	.39
Pronoun usage	.37	.21	.46	.17	.03	.40
Parallel structure	.35	.31	.35	.33	.33	.31
Active/passive	.27	.22	.31	.22	.23	.11
Idiomatic usage	.40	.38	.48	.27	.40	.37
Punctuation	.39	.28	.32	.28	.24	.44
Vocabulary	.59	.50	.63	.37	.55	.58
Diction (level)	.49	.58	.65	.42	.59	.58
Diction (precision)	.60	.59	.53	.40	.62	.59
Language	.23	.40	.16	.28	.42	.37
Spelling	.28	.22	.15	.06	.30	.44
Supplementary Ratings						
Neatness	.11	.21	.07	.19	.30	.10
Legibility	.05	.19	.12	.17	.21	.07
Counts						
Words	.72	.71	.70	.69	.74	.73
Paragraphs	.40	.46	.37	.54	.40	.42
Pages	.68	.49	.67	.72	.32	.67

*Test scores including essays are excluded because of part-whole confoundings.

rhetorical strategy (.69). Certain essay characteristics appeared to influence the ratings across all groups: organization, support, transition, noteworthy ideas, and number of words written.

Mean Differences for Dichotomous Variables

Table 5 shows that five of the dichotomous variables developed from the supplementary ratings produced statistically significant mean differences in total holistic scores. The three examinees who did not follow instructions received significantly lower scores than those who did. The 189 examinees who did not complete their essays in the 20 minutes allowed received significantly lower scores. Eight examinees were identified who had an obvious problem with the English language; they received significantly lower scores on average than did other examinees. Fifty-nine examinees used what is known as a "standard essay format." That is, the essay was composed of four or five paragraphs, the first paragraph contained the introduction, the last a summary or conclusion, and the intermediate paragraphs discussed separate topics that had been signaled in the introduction. Those examinees using a standard essay format received better scores on average than those who did not (but other evidence shows clearly that it was possible to receive a very high score *without* using a standard essay format). The 61 examinees who used a literary reference in their essays received better scores than those who did not, on average (again, evidence to be presented later shows that literary references were not required to receive high scores).

Mean Differences for Categorical Variables

Table 6 shows that essays classified in certain content categories received higher scores, on average, than did essays in other categories. Essays that combined current affairs and literature, and those that combined literature and history, received the highest average scores. Those

TABLE 5

Mean Differences for Dichotomous Variables

Variable	*Coding*	*N*	*Total Essay Score*		*Effect Size*
			Mean	*S.D.*	
Instructions followed	Yes	397	13.98	3.68	1.96*
	No	3	8.33	2.08	
Essay completed	Yes	211	15.60	2.98	1.08*
	No	189	12.08	3.55	
Language problem	Yes	8	10.50	4.75	.83*
	No	392	14.01	3.65	
Standard essay format	Yes	59	15.93	3.11	.68*
	No	338	13.60	3.70	
Literary reference	Yes	61	15.64	3.22	.58*
	No	339	13.63	3.70	
Statements accurate	Yes	235	14.49	3.51	.21
	No	17	13.65	4.15	
Proper indentations	Yes	273	13.93	3.76	.03
	No	125	14.05	3.50	

*$p < .01$

Abbreviations: N = number of cases, S.D. = standard deviation

essays that combined current affairs and history also received above average scores. Essays on personal experience (about a quarter of the essays sampled) received the lowest scores on average. Essays with political themes also received high scores, while those classified as "opinion" or "personal" received lower scores on average. There was no significant difference in scores between essays expressing liberal as opposed to conservative political leanings, but those expressing neither appeared to receive lower scores. Handwriting style—cursive, printing, or a combination of the two, made no significant difference in the scores received.

To further explore the differences observed in Table 6, some categories were combined and analyzed, as shown in Table 7. Essays based on personal experience were compared with two combinations of content. First, the use of personal experience was compared to essays based on current affairs, literature, or history alone, *or* on combinations of these; the difference obtained was statistically significant. A larger effect size, however, was obtained when essays on personal experience were compared to essays based on *combinations* of current affairs, literature, or history. A third comparison shown in Table 7 is between essays using current affairs, literature, or history alone and essays using combinations of current affairs, literature, or history. The essays with combined content received better average scores than those focusing on a single content category. Finally, Table 7 compares the combination of "opinion" and "personal" essays with the combination of "didactic" and "political" essays, and shows that essays in the opinion/personal combination category received significantly lower scores.

TABLE 6

Mean Differences for Categorical Variables

Variable	*Category*	N	*Total Essay Score*		p
			Mean	S.D.	
Essay content	1. Current affairs	119	14.34	3.79	<.01
	2. Literature	34	14.44	3.80	
	3. History	63	14.29	3.78	
	4. Personal experience	101	13.16	3.96	
	5. Current affairs/literature	12	16.58	2.43	
	6. Current affairs/history	25	15.60	3.05	
	7. Literature/history	3	16.33	3.05	
	8. Not classified	43	11.88	3.33	
Essay type	1. Opinion	207	13.46	3.70	<.01
	2. Didactic	132	14.70	3.63	
	3. Political	15	15.93	2.76	
	4. Polemic	4	9.25	1.50	
	5. Personal	42	13.60	3.56	
Political orientation	1. Liberal	153	14.94	3.50	<.01
	2. Conservative	22	14.86	2.83	
	3. Indeterminate	222	13.17	3.75	
Handwriting style	1. Cursive	149	14.13	3.42	.61
	2. Printing	131	13.96	3.87	
	3. Cursive and printing	120	13.68	3.84	

TABLE 7

Mean Differences for Combined Categories

Variable	*Category*	*Total Essay Score Effect*			
		N	*Mean*	S.D.	*Size*
Essay content	1. Personal experience	101	13.16	3.96	.38*
	2. Current affairs, literature, history, or combinations thereof	246	14.59	3.47	
Essay content	1. Personal experience	101	13.16	3.96	.82*
	2. Combinations of current affairs, literature, or history	40	15.95	2.85	
Essay content	1. Current affairs, literature, or history	216	14.34	5.52	.53*
	2. Combinations of current affairs, literature, or history	40	15.95	2.85	
Essay type	1. Opinion and personal	249	13.49	3.67	.37*
	2. Didactic and political	147	14.83	3.56	

*p<.01

Regression Analyses

The regression analyses showed that a considerable amount of the variance in total holistic essay scores was explainable by the other variables developed. Table 8 presents regression analyses for three different variable sets. The first variable set consisted of general characteristics, and as Table 8 shows, 8 of the 12 general characteristics rated made statistically significant contributions to the prediction of total essay scores. The multiple correlation coefficient of .84, when squared, shows that these eight characteristics explained over two-thirds (.70) of the variance in the essay scores. The beta weights indicate that the most important contributors in this regression were support, transition, and organization.

The second variable set examined consisted of syntactic characteristics, and Table 8 shows that four of the six syntactic characteristics contributed significantly to the prediction. This variable set yielded a multiple correlation of only .50, however, indicating that these variables were less important in determining total holistic essay scores than were the general characteristics. The third variable set consisted of lexical characteristics, and as Table 8 shows, three of the five lexical characteristics rated contributed significantly to the prediction. These three lexical characteristics, interestingly, yielded a higher multiple correlation than did the syntactic characteristics (.60 versus .50).

TABLE 8

Multiple Regression of Total Essay Scores on Three Different Variable Sets (N = 400)

Variable Set	b	beta	p	R
General Characteristics				
Constant	−1.349		.02	.84
Thesis statement	.251	.10	<.01	
Rhetorical strategy	.182	.06	.08	
Support	.423	.21	<.01	
Transition	.492	.21	<.01	
Sentence logic	.230	.09	.01	
Organization	.404	.18	<.01	
Paragraphing	.202	.08	.02	
Development	.377	.14	<.01	
Syntactic Characteristics				
Constant	−4.239		.01	.50
Subject/verb agreement	.580	.17	<.01	
Parallel structure	.985	.18	<.01	
Idiomatic usage	.946	.24	<.01	
Punctuation	.580	.14	<.01	
Lexical Characteristics				
Constant	4.567		<.01	.60
Vocabulary	.445	.17	.01	
Diction (level)	.647	.26	<.01	
Diction (precision)	.546	.23	<.01	

Abbreviations: *b* = raw regression coefficient; *beta* = standardized regression coefficient; *p* = probability; *R* = multiple regression coefficient

TABLE 9

Multiple Regression of Total Essay Scores on the Three Variable Sets Combined with Other Variables (N= 400)

Variable Set	b	beta	p	R
1. All Ratings Plus Words Written				
Constant	−4.357		<.01	.90
Thesis statement	.182	.08	.01	
Support	.251	.12	<.01	
Transition	.387	.16	<.01	
Organization	.308	.14	<.01	
Paragraphing	.145	.06	.04	
Development	.176	.06	.03	
Subject/verb agreement	.298	.09	<.01	
Idiomatic usage	.432	.11	<.01	
Vocabulary	.163	.06	.03	
Words written	.019	.38	<.01	
2. All Ratings Plus Words Written, SAT-V Score, and TSWE Score				
Constant	−5.531		<.01	.91
Thesis statement	.163	.07	.02	
Support	.240	.12	<.01	
Transition	.369	.16	<.01	
Organization	.285	.13	<.01	
Paragraphing	.172	.07	<.01	
Development	.178	.06	.02	
Subject/verb agreement	.208	.06	.02	
Idiomatic usage	.434	.11	<.01	
Words written	.017	.36	<.01	
SAT-V	.003	.12	.03	
TSWE	.027	.07	<.01	

Note: Variables with nonsignificant coefficients were excluded.

Table 9 extends the three variable sets shown in Table 8 to include number of words written and SAT-V and TSWE scores. The first variable set is the result of combining all 22 ratings with the count of words written. Words written added substantially to the multiple correlation, increasing it from .85 to .90. Of the 10 variables in this first variable set in Table 9, words written made the most significant contribution (beta = .38). The second variable set in Table 9 included SAT-V and TSWE scores, in addition to number of words written. The 11 variables in this second set yielded a multiple correlation of .91, only slightly higher than that achieved without including SAT-V and TSWE scores. Note that the vocabulary rating in the first variable set failed to contribute to the second set, probably because of the addition of SAT-V scores, which include a vocabulary component. Even with all of these variables included, the single most important contributor in the regression was number of words written (beta = .36).

Table 10 presents the results of an analysis to determine the percentage of variance in essay scores accounted for by 10 significant contributing variables derived from the essays themselves (i.e., excluding SAT-V and TSWE scores). The last column of Table 10 shows the overall percentage of variance accounted for by these 10 significant variables (.81, the square of the multiple correlation). Table 10 also shows the percentage of variance accounted for by each of the variables in the set. By far, most of the variance in essay scores (28 percent) was accounted for by number of words written. Other major contributors were transition (11 percent) and organization (10 percent).

Table 11 shows the results when three of the dichotomous or categorical variables of particular interest were added to the regression. Whether the essay was completed, whether a literary reference was used, and whether personal content was used were examined. When combined with all other predictors, essay completion accounted for 5 percent of the variance, making a literary reference for 1 percent, and referring to personal content for 2 percent. To determine whether these three variables contributed significantly beyond their impact in combination with the other variables, the hierarchical regression methods of Cohen and Cohen

TABLE 10

Percentage of Variance in Essay Scores Accounted for by Different Essay Characteristics

Essay Characteristic	r	beta	*Percentage of Variance* (r × beta)
Thesis statement	.6089	.0756	.0460
Support	.7027	.1257	.0883
Transition	.6901	.1649	.1138
Organization	.7313	.1375	.1006
Paragraphing	.5560	.0611	.0340
Development	.6167	.0653	.0403
Subject/verb agreement	.3951	.0866	.0342
Idiomatic usage	.3832	.1077	.0413
Vocabulary	.5421	.0636	.0345
Words written	.7216	.3842	.2772
			R^2 = .8102

(1983) were used. The squared multiple correlation coefficient with the target variable added was compared with the squared multiple correlation coefficient without the target variable. Tests of significance showed that both essay completion and use of personal content contributed significantly at the .01 level, while use of a literary reference did not make a significant contribution beyond that of the other variables.

Computer Analyses

To provide even greater detail in the analyses of the relationship between essay characteristics and total holistic scores, additional analyses were conducted using the Style program of The Writer's Workbench (Cherry, 1981). A total of 27 Style variables were selected for analysis. The Workbench variables excluded tended to be those that correlated highly with number of words written. These variables were excluded because the relationships between total holistic scores and number of words written had been analyzed previously.

Table 12 shows means for the 27 Style variables and indicates statistically significant mean differences. Standard deviations are given in Table 13. Only two of the Style variables yielded mean differences between males and females significant at the .05 level. The percentage of simple sentences (SMPLP) used was slightly higher for males than for females, and the percentage of sentences beginning with verbs (VERBPB) was slightly higher for females. It is not clear what meaning might be attached to these differences, except that the generally higher scores on all tests of the females in this study are consistent with the use of fewer simple sentences (see Table 3).

TABLE 11

Contribution of Categorical Variables Beyond Initial Variable Set

Variable Set	b	beta	P	*Percentage of Variance*	R
Adding "Essay Completed"					
Constant	−2.442				
Thesis statement	.192	.08	<.01	.05	.90
Support	.271	.14	<.01	.10	
Transition	.378	.16	<.01	.11	
Organization	.261	.12	<.01	.09	
Paragraphing	.132	.06	.05	.03	
Development	.183	.07	.02	.04	
Subject/verb agreement	.306	.09	<.01	.04	
Idiomatic usage	.436	.11	<.01	.04	
Vocabulary	.154	.06	.03	.03	
Words written	.0167	.34	<.01	.24	
Essay completed? (Yes = 1, No = 2)	−.835	−.11	<.01	.05	
Adding "Literary Reference"					
Constant	−3.386				
Thesis statement	.180	.07	.01	.04	.90
Support	.241	.12	<.01	.08	
Transition	.398	.17	<.01	.12	
Organization	.303	.14	<.01	.10	
Paragraphing	.150	.06	.03	.03	
Development	.174	.06	.03	.04	
Subject/verb agreement	.304	.09	<.01	.04	
Idiomatic usage	.437	.11	<.01	.04	
Vocabulary	.154	.06	.04	.03	
Words written	.0187	.38	<.01	.27	
Literary reference (Yes = 1, No = 2)	−.479	−.05	.04	.01	
Adding "Content Personal"					
Constant	−5.638				
Thesis statement	.170	.07	.03	.04	.90
Support	.217	.11	<.01	.08	
Transition	.381	.16	<.01	.11	
Organization	.255	.11	<.01	.08	
Paragraphing	.123	.05	.09	.03	
Development	.220	.09	<.01	.06	
Subject/verb agreement	.360	.10	<.01	.04	
Idiomatic usage	.438	.11	<.01	.04	
Vocabulary	.203	.08	<.01	.04	
Words written	.0190	.38	<.01	.27	
Content personal (Yes = 1, No = 2)*	.711	.09	<.01	.02	

*The content of 101 essays was coded as "Personal Experience." The content of 246 essays was coded as "Current Affairs," "Literature," "History," or combinations thereof. The content of 43 essays was not classified because too little was written or because it did not fit into any category.

TABLE 12

Mean Differences for Gender and Ethnic Groups on Writer's Workbench Style Variables

		Group							
		Male	Female		Asian American	Black	Hispanic	White	
Variable	N	187	213	p	100	100	100	100	p
AVSLEN		16.6	17.3	.08	16.5	17.6	17.2	16.6	<.01
AVWLEN		4.60	4.61	.75	4.61	4.59	4.54	4.68	.02
PCWDS		52.3	51.9	.26	52.5	51.8	51.0	52.9	<.01
AVLENCW		6.05	6.06	.89	6.06	6.04	6.00	6.13	.32
PSHTS		21.9	23.5	.19	21.7	23.6	24.6	21.3	.18
PLNGS		7.44	8.30	.28	7.35	8.10	8.58	7.59	.70
SMPLP		40.9	37.0	.02	40.2	37.9	36.9	40.3	.37
CPLEXP		40.1	42.6	.11	41.8	41.7	43.0	39.1	.33
POUNDP		6.45	6.83	.63	6.50	6.02	6.29	7.79	.40
CCP		12.4	13.5	.40	11.4	14.2	13.7	12.7	.41
TOBEP		33.4	34.8	.23	31.4	34.7	36.2	34.2	.02
AUXP		19.8	19.6	.84	20.0	18.6	20.4	19.9	.63
INFP		14.5	14.8	.66	15.2	15.5	13.5	14.7	.23
PASSP		9.55	8.92	.44	7.69	10.1	9.12	9.91	.13
PREPP		10.6	10.3	.19	10.5	10.7	10.1	10.4	.36
CONJP		3.33	3.45	.18	3.30	3.20	3.57	3.38	.29
ADVP		5.11	5.19	.71	5.12	4.69	5.43	5.38	.03
NOUNP		23.1	23.0	.67	23.5	23.0	22.3	23.4	.13
ADJP		13.0	12.7	.30	12.8	13.0	12.5	13.2	.44
PRONP		10.3	10.4	.79	10.3	10.1	11.1	10.1	.28
NOMP		.406	.394	.68	.380	.431	.410	.376	.50
PREPPB		13.2	13.5	.83	14.7	14.0	11.5	13.2	.19
ADVPB		7.73	7.58	.86	7.56	7.08	6.89	9.06	.24
VERBPB		.850	1.54	<.05	1.47	.550	1.35	1.50	.16
SUBCPB		9.20	9.02	.85	8.85	9.39	9.47	8.70	.91
CONJPB		2.33	1.93	.44	2.63	.810	2.51	2.53	.03
ABST		2.40	2.29	.42	2.72	2.33	2.10	2.22	<.01

Abbreviations: AVSLEN = Average Sentence Length; AVWLEN = Average Word Length; PCWDS = Percentage of Content Words; AVLENCW = Average Length of Content Words; PSHTS = Percentage of Short Sentences; PLNGS = Percentage of Long Sentences; SMPLP = Percentage of Simple Sentences; CPLEXP = Percentage of Complex Sentences; POUNDP = Percentage of Compound Sentences; CCP = Percentage of Compound-Complex Sentences; TOBEP = Percentage of "to be" Verbs; AUXP = Percentage of Auxiliary Verbs; INFP = Percentage of Infinitive Verbs; PASSP = Percentage of Passive Verbs; PREPP = Percentage of Prepositions; CONJP = Percentage of Conjunctions; ADVP = Percentage of Adverbs; NOUNP = Percentage of Nouns; ADJP = Percentage of Adjectives; PRONP = Percentage of Pronouns; NOMP = Percentage of Nominalizations; PREPPB = Percentage of Prepositions Beginning Sentences; ADVPB = Percentage of Adverbs Beginning Sentences; VERBPB = Percentage of Verbs Beginning Sentences; SUBCPB = Percentage of Subordinate Conjunctions Beginning Sentences; CONJPB = Percentage of Conjunctions Beginning Sentences; ABST = Percentage of Abstractness

TABLE 13

Standard Deviations for Gender and Ethnic Groups on Writer's Workbench Style Variables

		Group					
		Male	Female	Asian American	Black	Hispanic	White
Variable	N	187	213	100	100	100	100
AVSLEN		3.92	4.20	3.22	5.29	3.93	3.54
AVWLEN		.34	.31	.28	.34	.35	.32
PCWDS		4.27	4.13	4.53	4.12	3.90	4.02
AVLENCW		.49	.47	.40	.47	.53	.49
PSHTS		12.4	12.1	12.2	12.7	12.4	11.6
PLNGS		7.73	8.08	7.05	8.55	8.08	7.99
SMPLP		17.0	15.8	16.8	16.6	15.8	16.6
CPLEXP		15.0	15.8	15.9	17.2	15.9	12.6
POUNDP		8.19	7.66	7.24	8.51	7.72	8.09
CCP		11.5	12.9	11.1	15.4	10.3	11.7
TOBEP		11.9	10.7	10.5	12.4	11.1	10.7
AUXP		10.9	9.26	9.64	9.74	10.8	10.0
INFP		7.39	7.28	7.21	7.41	8.03	6.51
PASSP		9.23	6.90	6.72	10.3	7.30	7.42
PREPP		2.36	2.30	2.14	2.40	2.29	2.48
CONJP		1.39	1.39	1.30	1.34	1.44	1.49
ADVP		3.16	2.08	1.74	1.93	1.93	2.16
NOUNP		3.84	3.83	4.29	3.78	3.54	3.62
ADJP		3.16	3.08	3.05	3.35	2.81	3.25
PRONP		4.38	3.90	4.11	4.14	4.29	3.94
NOMP		.30	.29	.22	.29	.35	.30
PREPPB		10.6	11.1	10.2	12.7	9.43	10.8
ADVPB		8.36	8.28	7.71	8.68	7.87	8.86
VERBPB		2.81	3.91	3.45	2.20	3.74	4.08
SUBCPB		9.11	9.31	9.26	10.0	9.01	8.59
CONJPB		4.72	5.37	6.64	2.50	5.09	5.01
ABST		1.34	1.30	1.52	1.21	1.22	1.23

Abbreviations: AVSLEN = Average Sentence Length; AVWLEN = Average Word Length; PCWDS = Percentage of Content Words; AVLENCW = Average Length of Content Words; PSHTS = Percentage of Short Sentences; PLNGS = Percentage of Long Sentences; SMPLP = Percentage of Simple Sentences; CPLEXP = Percentage of Complex Sentences; POUNDP = Percentage of Compound Sentences; CCP = Percentage of Compound-Complex Sentences; TOBEP = Percentage of "to be" Verbs; AUXP = Percentage of Auxiliary Verbs; INFP = Percentage of Infinitive Verbs; PASSP = Percentage of Passive Verbs; PREPP = Percentage of Prepositions; CONJP = Percentage of Conjunctions; ADVP = Percentage of Adverbs; NOUNP = Percentage of Nouns; ADJP = Percentage of Adjectives; PRONP = Percentage of Pronouns; NOMP = Percentage of Nominalizations; PREPPB = Percentage of Prepositions Beginning Sentences; ADVPB = Percentage of Adverbs Beginning Sentences; VERBPB = Percentage of Verbs Beginning Sentences; SUBCPB = Percentage of Subordinate Conjunctions Beginning Sentences; CONJPB = Percentage of Conjunctions Beginning Sentences; ABST = Percentage of Abstractness

Table 12 presents seven variables that showed differences among ethnic groups that were significant at the .05 level: average sentence length (AVSLEN), average word length (AVWLEN), percentage of content words (PCWDS), percentage of "to be" verbs (TOBEP), percentage of adverbs (ADVP), percentage of sentences beginning with conjunctions (CONJPB), and percentage of abstractness (ABST).

Average sentence length was greater for black and Hispanic examinees; white examinees used the largest

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number of long words and Hispanic examinees the fewest; the percentage of content words was greater for white and Asian examinees; Hispanic examinees used the largest number of "to be" verbs and Asian examinees the fewest; black examinees used somewhat fewer adverbs than the other ethnic groups; black examinees tended not to begin sentences with conjunctions; and Asian examinees tended to use more abstract expressions than the other groups.

Table 14 presents correlations between the Workbench variables and holistic scores. Generally, it is seen that these variables tend not to correlate well with holistic scores. The highest correlation in the table (.32) is between the holistic scores for Hispanic examinees and the percentage of passive verbs used by those students. The second highest correlation in the table is between the holistic scores for black examinees and the percentage of sentences begun with verbs by those students. It is not clear what meaning, if any, these correlations have.

TABLE 14

Correlation of Writer's Workbench Style Variables with Total Essay Scores

	Group						
Variable	*Male*	*Female*	*Asian American*	*Black*	*Hispanic*	*White*	*Total*
N	187	213	100	100	100	100	400
AVSLEN	.04	.04	.09	.02	.14	.06	.05
AVWLEN	.10	.15	.20	.14	.19	−.11	.12
PCWDS	.11	.20	.08	.19	.10	.12	.14
AVLENCW	.09	.10	.20	.11	.20	−.15	.10
PSHTS	.02	.02	.11	.03	−.01	.02	.03
PLNGS	−.02	.04	.03	.02	.08	−.04	.02
SMPLP	.06	.06	−.04	.13	−.02	.05	.04
CPLEXP	−.14	.00	.03	−.10	.03	−.13	−.05
POUNDP	.19	.07	.04	.12	.15	.18	.14
CCP	−.05	−.11	.00	−.10	−.12	−.06	−.07
TOBEP	.02	.06	.15	−.14	.07	.14	.05
AUXP	.06	−.02	−.01	.02	.00	.06	.02
INFP	.01	.04	−.11	.15	.05	.06	.03
PASSP	.12	.19	.25	−.10	.32	.18	.14
PREPP	.04	.20	.15	.19	.20	−.05	.10
CONJP	.15	−.10	.10	.00	−.04	.06	.04
ADVP	.00	−.01	−.19	.01	−.06	.11	−.01
NOUNP	.05	.21	.21	.17	.08	−.02	.12
ADJP	.14	.11	.01	.15	.16	.14	.12
PRONP	−.14	−.20	−.19	−.20	−.13	−.13	−.16
NOMP	−.11	.04	.00	−.06	.03	−.09	−.04
PREPPB	−.02	.02	−.06	−.04	.13	.01	.00
ADVPB	.10	.09	.12	.11	−.01	.06	.09
VERBPB	.08	.05	.09	.29	−.12	.07	.07
SUBCPB	−.10	−.13	−.13	−.18	−.01	−.14	−.12
CONJPB	.07	−.02	.03	.13	−.12	−.01	.01
ABST	.02	.11	.02	.12	.11	.04	.06

Abbreviations: AVSLEN = Average Sentence Length; AVWLEN = Average Word Length; PCWDS = Percentage of Content Words; AVLENCW = Average Length of Content Words; PSHTS = Percentage of Short Sentences; PLNGS = Percentage of Long Sentences; SMPLP = Percentage of Simple Sentences; CPLEXP = Percentage of Complex Sentences; POUNDP = Percentage of Compound Sentences; CCP = Percentage of Compound-Complex Sentences; TOBEP = Percentage of "to be" Verbs; AUXP = Percentage of Auxiliary Verbs; INFP = Percentage of Infinitive Verbs; PASSP = Percentage of Passive Verbs; PREPP = Percentage of Prepositions; CONJP = Percentage of Conjunctions; ADVP = Percentage of Adverbs; NOUNP = Percentage of Nouns; ADJP = Percentage of Adjectives; PRONP = Percentage of Pronouns; NOMP = Percentage of Nominalizations; PREPPB = Percentage of Prepositions Beginning Sentences; ADVPB = Percentage of Adverbs Beginning Sentences; VERBPB = Percentage of Verbs Beginning Sentences; SUBCPB = Percentage of Subordinate Conjunctions Beginning Sentences; CONJPB = Percentage of Conjunctions Beginning Sentences; ABST = Percentage of Abstractness

Analyses of Exemplars

In these exploratory analyses, exemplary essays of three types were identified: (1) those with extremely high scores, (2) those with higher scores than predicted by the regression equations developed, and (3) those with significantly lower scores than predicted by the regression equations. Three essays of each type were identified and these are included in this report as Appendix D.

Essays with Highest Holistic Scores

These essays demonstrate that it was possible to receive a high score even though many of the suggestions derived from the previous analyses were not followed. Case 375 received 23 of the possible 24 holistic score points, indicating that only one of the four readers gave it a score of less than the maximum of 6. And yet Case 375 is an essay about a very personal experience, is not in standard essay format, and has no literary references or quotations. It received the highest possible ratings for thesis, ideas, and support. This essay has a dramatic introduction and vividly describes an experience of a high school drum major being attacked following a homecoming football game by a fan of the opposing team.

Case 44 received 22 of the possible 24 holistic score points. This essay is also about a personal experience, is not in standard essay format, and contains no literary references or quotations. It received the highest possible ratings for thesis, strategy, ideas, support, and tone.

Of the three highest scoring essays, Case 80 is the only one that follows the suggestions derived from the previous analyses. Its content is about current affairs and history, it is in standard four-paragraph essay format, and it contains both literary references and quotations. It received the highest possible rating only for thesis statement, although the ratings were very high for support, transition, tone, and sentence variety. This essay received low marks for strategy and ideas, however.

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All three of the highest scoring essays were written by examinees with high SAT-V scores: 620, 680, and 590, respectively, and all three essays were well above average in length.

Essays with Higher Scores than Predicted

Predictions were based on the regression analyses presented in Table 9, excluding SAT-V and TSWE scores. These multiple-choice score predictors were excluded because the objective was to identify essays that received better scores than would have been expected from the ratings and other data available on the actual essays alone. Case 87 received a total holistic score of 17, although the predicted score was 12.683. None of the ratings for this essay were above average, and a number were negative, so we must look elsewhere to explain why the total score was better than expected. The essay was rated to be in standard format, it contains a literary (actually an art history) reference, and it combines current affairs and history content. The essay demonstrates considerable knowledge of art history, beginning with the sculptor, Donatello, and later relating Donatello's sculpture to Michelangelo's (although Michelangelo is misspelled).

Case 121 received a total holistic score of 17, even though its predicted score was only 13.640. None of the ratings of specific characteristics were particularly positive (although there was a "7" for ideas), and the essay is not in standard essay format, has no literary references, and is about a personal experience. It does tell an interesting story of a boy who got mixed up with the wrong people, but later turned himself around. This essay may have evoked sympathy in the readers, and/or they may have simply thought it was a good story, and that could be why it received higher scores than otherwise might have been expected.

Case 127 received a total holistic score of 16, but had a predicted score of only 10.939. Its ratings were low, it is not in standard essay format, and there are no literary references. Further, it relates a personal experience, focusing on a sister whose brother was a rebel, always questioning authority, while the sister did not. The author (the sister) explains how her brother taught her not to be so submissive. As in the previous exemplar, this one may have received better marks than expected simply because it is an interesting story.

Essays with Lower Scores than Predicted

Case 52 received the highest possible ratings for thesis statement, ideas, support, transition, sentence variety, sentence logic, organization, paragraphing, subject/verb agreement, idiomatic usage, punctuation, vocabulary, and level of diction. It is therefore not surprising that the predicted total holistic score was very high (24.303). Since the essay received an actual total score of only 20, however, it was classified as having a substantially lower score than would have been predicted. The predictive error at the extremes of the distribution is higher than in the intermediate ranges, and this may be one reason for the discrepancy. Nevertheless, this essay was evaluated as not having been completed, and the rating for the conclusion was relatively low. The essay also has only two paragraphs, the last of which is rather lengthy. Why it received the maximum possible rating for paragraphing (from two different raters) is not clear, since the second paragraph appears to need at least one break. Two of the readers gave this essay a total score of "6," while the other two gave it a total score of only "4." This reader discrepancy could also explain why this essay was scored lower than predicted.

Case 180 was predicted to have a score of 13.986 but actually received a total holistic score of only 10. Ratings of the characteristics of this essay were generally low, with an occasional "7" (sentence variety, paragraphing, active/passive). It received a very low "2" rating for neatness, however, and it was evaluated as not completed. It also has some spelling errors and some probably inadvertent in word error usage ("easy" rather than "easily" and "our" rather than "are"). Additionally, the essay contains some very awkward expressions: "My personal feelings being myself are . . ."; "if someone were to give you trouble left and right . . ."; "what makes the one's who turn out bad or inferorate bad behavior is a source unknown."

Case 189 had a predicted score of 12.497 but actually received a score of only 9. All ratings were average or below average except for support, which received a "7." Ratings for vocabulary and diction were especially low. Even though standard essay format was used, the essay was not completed. The essay begins fairly well with an introductory paragraph and a second paragraph that references Martin Luther King and the court case of *Brown v. Board of Education*. The fourth paragraph mentions Hitler but has some awkward language ("Hitler outrageous way to rise to power . . .") and is not developed. There is no conclusion since the author apparently ran out of time. Even though the rater did not note a language problem, there may have been one.

Conclusion

These analyses of essays written on a single topic at one administration of the ECT cannot be generalized to other topics and other situations, but they do suggest some characteristics that influenced the scores readers

gave the essays written for the 1990 ECT. To the degree that these characteristics are similar to those identified for other topics and other administrations, some more general conclusions might be drawn. Table 15 shows a comparison of the strongest correlates with holistic scores on the 1979 and the 1990 ECT essay topics. For both, the five most important characteristics were overall organization, use of supporting materials, noteworthy ideas, rhetorical strategy, and thesis statement. Moreover, the order of importance of these five characteristics was almost identical in the two ECT administrations. This consistency in results occurred despite the fact that 11 years had elapsed between the test administrations and the fact that different topics, students, and readers were involved.

Of the essay characteristics rated in both studies, overall organization correlated most strongly with total holistic scores in the 1990 administration (.74). This was almost identical to the outcome of the 1982 study (Breland & Jones, 1982) of 1979 ECT essays written on a different topic. In that study, the correlation between total holistic scores and overall organization was .73. It seems safe to conclude, therefore, that organization is strongly related to the holistic score an essay receives.

The second strongest correlate with high holistic scores in the present study was the use of supporting materials (.70), and this same characteristic was also the second highest correlate (.71) in the 1982 study. Using supporting materials seems to be important for receiving high scores.

The third highest correlate with total scores was noteworthy ideas, including originality of thought and insight. This correlation was .66 for the 1990 topic and .70 for the 1979 topic, for which this characteristic also ranked third.

Other characteristics that correlated highly with holistic scores in both studies included rhetorical strategy, thesis statement, paragraphing, transition, development, sentence logic, sentence variety, and tone, although these ratings were not derived in exactly the same way in both years. The study of the 1979 topic combined paragraphing and transition in a single rating, while the study of the 1990 topic split these into two ratings. Development was not rated in the study of the 1979 topic, although it correlated highly (.61) with holistic scores for the 1990 topic.

Correlations were similar for the different student groups in both research efforts, although gender comparisons were not made in the study of the 1979 topic. For the 1990 topic, overall organization was the strongest correlate with holistic scores for both males and females (.74 and .73, respectively). The second strongest correlate, use of supporting materials, was also nearly the same for both males and females (.71 and .69, respectively). And the third highest correlate, noteworthy ideas, was likewise similar for both males and females (.67 and .65, respectively).

With respect to differences between ethnic groups, overall organization showed the highest correlations for all four groups (.71, .66, .74, and .77 for the Asian American, black, Hispanic, and white samples, respectively). The second strongest correlate was slightly different for the four groups, however. In the Asian American sample, transition showed the second highest correlation; in the black sample, it was use of supporting materials; in the Hispanic sample, transition was tied with support for second; and in the white sample, support was second. The differences were small, however.

The analyses for the present study yielded some further characteristics that influenced the holistic scores given on the 1990 ECT essay examination. Those essays showing evidence that the writer had followed instructions, and that were completed, used standard essay format, contained literary references, and demonstrated reasonable proficiency in the English language received slightly higher holistic scores than essays not having these characteristics. Essays with content combining current affairs and literature, current affairs and history, or literature and history were scored slightly higher on average than essays based only on personal experience. Nevertheless, some of the top-scoring essays written on the 1990 topic were about personal experience and made no references to literature, history, or current affairs.

As observed in previous studies, longer essays received higher holistic scores, on average, than shorter

TABLE 15

Highest Correlates with Total Holistic Scores for 1979 and 1990 ECT Essays

Essay Characteristic Rated	*Correlations with Total Holistic Scores*	
	1979	*1990*
Overall organization	.73	.74
Use of supporting materials	.71	.70
Noteworthy ideas	.70	.66
Rhetorical strategy	.66	.60
Thesis statement	.64	.62
Development*	—	.61
Transition*	—	.59
Paragraphing and transition**	.57	—
Paragraphing*	—	.56
Sentence logic	.52	.56
Tone and attitude	.48	.55
Sentence variety	.47	.51

*Not rated for 1979 topic.
**Not rated for 1990 topic.

essays. Such an outcome follows, however, from the other ratings obtained. Using supporting materials, for example, requires that words be written to explain the relevance of such materials. And it is impossible to fully develop an essay without writing a sufficient number of words. Given the importance of these kinds of interactions, extremely brief essays are probably very unlikely to receive high holistic scores.

The findings of this study, and similar studies conducted previously, are probably not much different from what has long been known by English teachers. The brief, impromptu essay examination poses some particular challenges for the examinee, however. Ideas must be formulated, organized, and then developed in a relatively brief period of time. Most examinees would probably benefit from some practice, under strict time constraints, in writing essays of this type.

Such practice should focus on overall organization, use of supporting materials, formulating ideas, developing a rhetorical strategy, making thesis statements, essay development, appropriate paragraphing, and making good transitions between sentences and paragraphs. Although our limited analysis of one essay topic suggested that using literary references and a standard essay format, and not writing about personal experience were associated with higher scores on average, these factors may not generalize to other topics and have at best very small effects on total scores beyond the stronger correlates identified in this study.

It seems inappropriate to offer any advice specific to different gender and ethnic groups, although differences between groups were observed. It is not clear that emphasizing different essay characteristics for different groups would yield better performances, and such a focus could take time that would be better spent on the principal characteristics associated with high scores.

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Appendix A

Essay Topic and Instructions

ENGLISH COMPOSITION TEST WITH ESSAY

Part A

Time—20 minutes

You have twenty minutes to plan and write an essay on the topic assigned below. DO NOT WRITE ON ANOTHER TOPIC. AN ESSAY ON ANOTHER TOPIC IS NOT ACCEPTABLE.

The essay is assigned to give you an opportunity to show how well you can write. You should, therefore, take care to express your thoughts on the topic clearly and effectively. How well you write is much more important than how much you write, but to cover the topic adequately you may want to write more than one paragraph. Be specific.

Your essay must be written on the lines provided on the answer sheet. You will receive no other paper on which to write. You will find that you have enough space if you write on every line, avoid wide margins, and keep your handwriting to a reasonable size. It is important to remember that what you write will be read by someone who is not familiar with your handwriting. Try to write or print so that what you are writing is legible to the reader.

Consider carefully the following statement and the assignment below it. Then, plan and write your essay as directed.

"Outrageous behavior is instructive. It reveals to us the limits of our tolerance."

Assignment: The quotation implies that those who go beyond accepted standards help us to clarify our own standards. Do you agree or disagree with the quotation? Discuss, supporting your position with examples from current affairs, literature, history, or your own experience.

DO NOT WRITE YOUR ESSAY IN YOUR TEST BOOK. You will receive credit only for what you write on your answer sheet.

WHEN THE SUPERVISOR ANNOUNCES THAT TWENTY MINUTES HAVE PASSED, YOU MUST STOP WRITING THE ESSAY AND GO ON TO PART B IF YOU HAVE NOT ALREADY DONE SO. IF YOU FINISH YOUR ESSAY BEFORE THIS ANNOUNCEMENT, GO ON TO PART B AT ONCE.

BEGIN WRITING YOUR ESSAY ON THE ANSWER SHEET.

Appendix B

Rating Form and Instructions

Essay ID _____ Holistic Score ____ Reader ID ____

GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS	--	-	+	++
1. Thesis statement (explicit or implicit)	____	____	____	____
2. Rhetorical strategy	____	____	____	____
3. Noteworthy ideas: Originality, insight	____	____	____	____
4. Use of supporting materials, examples, etc.	____	____	____	____
5. Transition, flow, continuity	____	____	____	____
6. Tone and attitude	____	____	____	____
7. Variety of sentence patterns	____	____	____	____
8. Sentence logic	____	____	____	____
9. Overall organization	____	____	____	____
10. Paragraphing	____	____	____	____
11. Conclusion	____	____	____	____
12. Thesis Development	____	____	____	____
13. Other _____	____	____	____	____
SYNTACTIC CHARACTERISTICS				
14. Subject-verb agreement, verb forms, etc.	____	____	____	____
15. Pronoun usage: agreement with antecedent, etc.	____	____	____	____
16. Parallel structure: clauses, series, etc.	____	____	____	____
17. Active vs. passive voice	____	____	____	____
18. Idiomatic usage: prepositions and phrases	____	____	____	____
19. Punctuation	____	____	____	____
20. Other _____	____	____	____	____

LEXICAL CHARACTERISTICS

21. Range of vocabulary	___	___	___	___
22. Appropriate level of diction	___	___	___	___
23. Precision of diction, conciseness of phrasing	___	___	___	___
24. Figurative language: methaphor, analogy, cliche	___	___	___	___
25. Spelling	___	___	___	___
26. Other _____	___	___	___	___

Instructions

The rating form is based on a form used in a previous research study of ECT essays. It is intended as a means of determining what characteristics of ECT essays are deemed most important by ECT readers. The essays you will be reading have been randomly selected from the 1990 ECT administration, and holistic scores for these essays are already available. Therefore, there is no need to score the essays holistically.

In the upper left-hand corner of the rating form is a space for the essay ID. Although there is more than one identification number on the essay response sheet, the ID to be written in this space is found on the reverse side (page 3) of the essay response sheet. This is an eight-digit number printed vertically in the upper-left hand corner of page 3.

In the upper right-hand corner of the form is a space for reader identification. Write your reader number in this space.

The form lists a number of essay characteristics on the left side. Note that there are spaces to write in "other" characteristics that you may feel are important but are not adequately described by the characteristics listed. Please write in any characteristics that you believe to be important for a particular essay but which are not listed.

On the right side of the form are four columns and spaces for placing check marks for an essay that you believe to be especially weak (--), weak (-), strong (+), or especially strong (++) on a characteristic listed. If a characteristic is neither strong nor weak, but about average, leave the spaces to the right of that characteristic blank. Please do not place check marks in between spaces. Except for very brief essays, it will be useful if you can identify at least 10 characteristics for each essay that you believe to be either weak or strong.

Appendix C

Supplementary Ratings

Supplementary Ratings

1. Neatness (5 - superior, 4 - above average, 3 - average, 2 - below average, 1 - very messy).

2. Legibility (5 - superior, 4 - above average, 3 - average, 2 - below average, 1 - unreadable).

3. Were instructions followed? (1- yes, 2 - no).

4. Was the essay completed? (1 - yes, 2 - no).

5. Does the examinee appear to have a language problem? (1 - yes, 2 - no).

6. Does the essay follow a standard 4 or 5 paragraph theme format? (1 - yes, 2 - no).

7. Does the essay make reference to literature? (1 - yes, 2 - no).

8. Does the essay contain a literary quotation? (1 - yes, 2 - no).

9. Does the information in the essay appear to be accurate? (1 - yes, 2 - no, 3 - cannot be determined).

10. Are indentations made where appropriate? (1 - yes, 2 - no).

11. What is the content of the essay material? (1 - current affairs, 2 - literature, 3 - history, 4 - personal experience, 5 - current affairs and literature, 6 - current affairs and history, 7 - literature and history, 8 - literature and personal experience, 9 - no distinct content).

12. How might this essay be classified as to type? (1 - opinion, 2 - didactic, 3- political, 4 - entertaining, 5 - polemic, 6 - personal). An opinion classification means that the essay expresses the writer's opinion about the essay topic. Didactic essays attempt to teach the , reader about the essay topic. Political essays turn the essay topic into a political argument. Entertaining essays serve mainly to entertain the reader. Polemic essays argue against the topic of the essay. Personal essays focus on the life of the writer.

13. Does the examinee indicate a political orientation? (1 - yes, liberal, 2 - yes, conservative, 3 - no).

14. What handwriting style was used? (1 - cursive, 2 - printing, 3 - cursive and printing).

Appendix D

Selected Exemplars, with Data

Appendix D1

The Three Highest Scoring Exemplars with Analytical Ratings and Other Data

ECT 1990
CASE 375
BATCH 7889
SERIAL 0159

I flew headfirst into the side of the car. My head was spinning, my hands were shaking. I wasn't quite sure what had happened. I looked over my shoulder and saw a kid with a big smile on his face, he was surrounded by what I assumed were his friends. They were encouraging him, shouting, "Get him Andre!" and, "Do it again, man!"

It was the night of our Homecoming football game. You know, that hallowed and revered event, when if you don't win, you lose your first-born child or something like that. Anyway, I was the drum major of our band, we had just one a closely contested game, and since I was wearing a pure white uniform, I was easily singled out by irate fans of the opposition. They were upset and wanted to rumble. I happened to be in the wrong place at the wrong time.

Andre stepped up to me, very close this time. A familiar taste became reacquainted with my tastebuds, the taste of adrenaline. My head was pounding, I saw a face surrounded by dots, bright lights and flashes in front of me. I knew it was coming before it hit me. His fist connected with my lower jaw and split my lip. I felt and tasted the warm blood in my mouth. The small crowd that had gathered watched me for some sort of reaction to this outrageous action. I turned and walked away.

We are constantly being confronted with events, actions, happenings, etc., that test the standards we hold. That night I was confronted, and I realized that lowering myself to the immature and barbaric standards of Andre was just not worth it. I told myself I was better than that, as indeed I am. But other issues challenge us on a national level. American flags are burned on capitol steps, obscene music lyrics are sold in stores, pornographic art is hung on gallery walls, and great debate is spread nationwide.

This debate is televised, published, and sent through radio air waves. Because of debates on issues such as these, we can better define, and get a sense of our own standards. Some may call the actions or behaviors outrageous, others may argue that it is acceptable. But without a basis of argument, without an action from which discussion may stem, we will not be able to define our own standards. Thus, outrageous behavior can be used as clarification of our own standards.

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ECT 1990
CASE 375
BATCH 7889
SERIAL 0159

TOTAL HOLISTIC SCORE	23 (R1 = 6, R2 = 6, R3 = 5, R4 = 6)
PREDICTED SCORE	22.037
SAT-V	620
TSWE	53
SEX	MALE
ETHNIC/LANGUAGE	WHITE/ENGLISH FIRST LANGUAGE
THESIS	10
STRATEGY	9
IDEAS	10
SUPPORT	10
TRANSITION	9
TONE	9
VARIETY	6
LOGIC	7
ORGANIZATION	8
PARAGRAPHING	7
CONCLUSION	8
DEVELOPMENT	9
SUBJECT/VERB	7
PRONOUN USAGE	7
PARALLEL STRUCT	7
ACTIVE/PASSIVE	6
IDIOMATIC USAGE	6
PUNCTUATION	7
VOCABULARY	6
DICTION LEVEL	7
DICTION PRECISION	5
LANGUAGE	6
SPELLING	6
NEATNESS	4
LEGIBILITY	3
INSTRUCTIONS	YES
COMPLETED	YES
LANGUAGE PROB	NO
STANDARD FORM	NO
LIT REFERENCE	NO
LIT QUOTATION	NO
ACCURACY	NOT DETERMINABLE
INDENTATIONS	YES
CONTENT	PERSONAL EXPERIENCE
ESSAY TYPE	OPINION
POLITICAL OR	NONE
HANDWRITING	CURSIVE AND PRINTING
WORDS	412
PARAGRAPHS	5
PAGES	1.5

ECT 1990
CASE 44
BATCH 7723
SERIAL 0064

I agree with the implications of the quote "outrageous behavior is instructive. It reveals to us the limits of our own tolerance." In other words, seeing someone else do something which is outside the norm may help us to better define our own norm.

One incident which did this for me occurred during my freshman year in high school. My English teacher was not what you would call the quickest person in the universe. In fact, she was pretty stupid. So of course, the kids took advantage of her. They'd walk in late, and if she asked them why they were late, they'd say, "My bus got caught in traffic." This was a fifth period class.

Or if they hadn't written a response log to the reading we were supposed to have done, they'd turn in their French homework instead. They always got a 10/10 (except the one guy who tried to give her his Japanese homework. She noticed that).

Now, I'm not saying that I was a perfect student or anything, but I sometimes thought that people went a little too far with things. I never really had a definite line between "okay" and "not okay", it was just a vague sort of feeling.

Until one day, about 2/3 of the way through the year, a guy who sat in the back of the room really took a flying leap into the land of not-okay.

It started with some kind of argument about why he was late every day, I think. I wasn't paying much attention at first, but finally it escalated to the point where everyone in the room was watching. It seemed clear that the teacher didn't really want to argue about it, but the kid was really mad. When the teacher told him calmly to please sit down, he said, "No way, you stupid basketball head. You suck." Then he walked out.

Well. Not much else happened in class that day, and the next day the kid was back in class like nothing had happened. But for the rest of the year, everybody was much nicer to the teacher, and I decided never to take advantage of her not-so-swiftness again. The kid in the back of the class had shown us, better than we could show ourselves, the boundary between acceptable behavior and "far beyond anything I would every do."

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ECT 1990
CASE 44
BATCH 7723
SERIAL 0064

TOTAL HOLISTIC SCORE	22 (R1 = 5, R2 = 5, R3 = 6, R4 = 6)
PREDICTED SCORE	22.085
SAT-V	680
TSWE	57
SEX	FEMALE
ETHNIC/LANGUAGE	WHITE/ENGLISH FIRST LANGUAGE
THESIS	10
STRATEGY	10
IDEAS	10
SUPPORT	10
TRANSITION	9
TONE	10
VARIETY	8
LOGIC	8
ORGANIZATION	10
PARAGRAPHING	7
CONCLUSION	9
DEVELOPMENT	9
SUBJECT/VERB	6
PRONOUN USAGE	6
PARALLEL STRUCT	6
ACTIVE/PASSIVE	6
IDIOMATIC USAGE	6
PUNCTUATION	6
VOCABULARY	8
DICTION LEVEL	8
DICTION PRECISION	10
LANGUAGE	10
SPELLING	6
NEATNESS	4
LEGIBILITY	4
INSTRUCTIONS	YES
COMPLETED	YES
LANGUAGE PROB	NO
STANDARD FORM	NO
LIT REFERENCE	NO
LIT QUOTATION	NO
ACCURACY	NOT DETERMINABLE
INDENTATIONS	YES
CONTENT	PERSONAL EXPERIENCE
ESSAY TYPE	DIDACTIC
POLITICAL OR	LIBERAL
HANDWRITING	CURSIVE
WORDS	395
PARAGRAPHS	7
PAGES	1.3

ECT 1990
CASE 80
BATCH 7740
SERIAL 0237

Outrageous behavior helps us to identify our own standards of tolerance. This has been shown to be true throughout history. In both fiction and reality, the common human standards of tolerance are not truly known until someone else pushes them their outermost limits. Two examples of this philosophy are Saddam Hussien, and President Richard Nixon.

The Middle East Gulf Crisis has been exemplary to the tolerance idea. A crazed and power hungry man on the other side of the globe decides that he is going to see how much his own power can gain hIm. After several attempts to take over lands that he claims are his, other countries have drawn the line of tolerance. The United States for example, was slowly falling into the belief that military arms and inforcements were not needed anymore in the huge quantities of years past. The crisis in the middle east has taken that belief away. Now, more than ever, our tolerance, as a nation concerned with the welfare of others, has shown through the United States can not allow one man to economically plug the world. The entire oil supply of most of the major countries is endangered, the U.S. simply cannot stand for it. The actions taken as a nation, along with the troops and weapons that have been sent over, clearly exemplify that the tolerance level for this kind of action is very low. The United States would have never known how far to let this type of crisis go, until someone else pushed the line one step too far.

Richard Nixon, one of the past presidents of our nation is another example of outrageous behavior. He wanted to use his own constitutionally granted presidential powers and wield them to his own benefit. No other president in our history had gone as far as pushing those sacred powers into crime and scandal as he did. Although it was a negative experience for the country at the time, it proved to be better in the long run. His outrageous behavior set the limits for future presidents, and how they would use their power, through the many laws passed by Congress in reaction.

Through the outrageous behavior of men such as Saddam Hussein and ex-President Richard Nixon, the United States has shown its own limits of tolerance. Events such as these propagate and instill feelings that would be brought forth in no other manner. A well-know quote by Emily Dickinson directly applies to this, "You never know how tall you are, until you are called to rise." In this case, it is, "you never know how tolerant you are, until someone pushes you too far."

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ECT 1990
CASE 80
BATCH 7740
SERIAL 0237

TOTAL HOLISTIC SCORE	22 (R1 = 5, R2 = 6, R3 = 5, R4 = 6)
PREDICTED SCORE	22.669
SAT-V	590
TSWE	60
SEX	FEMALE
ETHNIC/LANGUAGE	HISPANIC/ENGLISH NOT FIRST LANGUAGE
THESIS	10
STRATEGY	6
IDEAS	6
SUPPORT	9
TRANSITION	9
TONE	9
VARIETY	9
LOGIC	6
ORGANIZATION	7
PARAGRAPHING	6
CONCLUSION	8
DEVELOPMENT	8
SUBJECT/VERB	8
PRONOUN USAGE	6
PARALLEL STRUCT	6
ACTIVE/PASSIVE	7
IDIOMATIC USAGE	6
PUNCTUATION	6
VOCABULARY	9
DICTION LEVEL	9
DICTION PRECISION	9
LANGUAGE	6
SPELLING	6
NEATNESS	3
LEGIBILITY	3
INSTRUCTIONS	YES
COMPLETED	YES
LANGUAGE PROB	NO
STANDARD FORM	YES
LIT REFERENCE	YES
LIT QUOTATION	YES
ACCURACY	YES
INDENTATIONS	YES
CONTENT	CURRENT AFFAIRS AND HISTORY
ESSAY TYPE	DIDACTIC
POLITICAL OR	LIBERAL
HANDWRITING	PRINTING
WORDS	446
PARAGRAPHS	4
PAGES	1.7

Appendix D2

Three Exemplars with Higher Holistic Scores than Predicted with Analytical Ratings and Other Data

ECT 1990
CASE 87
BATCH 7742
SERIAL 0092

Outrageous behavior has been shown by time to be instructive. Usually radicalism is taken as offensives by the exiting conservative majority. These radical ideas are usually arrived at from the discovering of some new and shocking knowledge. The shocked conservatives rebel against outrageous behavior, then as they learn about it they come to tolerate it and finally accept the radicalism in part or whole as normal.

Always in time outrageous behavior has been persecuted or attacked by the conservative majority. During the Renaissance, the sculptor Donatello, with his sculpture of David shocked art circles. The average person found the sculpture of the nude outrageous. Until then the church was the main subject of artistic ventures. Art for the sake of art was a new and unusual concept shunned by most except for the Medici family who commissioned the work.

The attributes of the outrageous behavior of an individual or group would eventually gain understanding and acceptance within the conservatives. The morality of the free-standing nude was at first shocking. As the renaissance progressed others came to respect Donatello for his work. This work influenced later sculptors and painters. Michealangelo with his sculpture of David shows how the outrageous gained respect within artistic communities. This outrageous action of one artist later became a convention.

Not only in art is there a tendency to isolate radicalism. In our own times, Rock N' Roll music was censsored or banned as lewd. It has now become the standard of popular music. It like the use of art for the sake of art was at once a radical idea which gained respect among its critics. Its influence then changed outrage to convention.

ECT 1990
CASE 87
BATCH 7742
SERIAL 0092

TOTAL HOLISTIC SCORE	17 (R1 = 5, R2 = 6, R3 = 3, R4 = 3)
PREDICTED	12.683
SAT-V	560
TSWE	53
SEX	MALE
ETHNIC/LANGUAGE	ASIAN/ENGLISH FIRST LANGUAGE
THESIS	6
STRATEGY	5
IDEAS	4
SUPPORT	6
TRANSITION	3
TONE	6
VARIETY	6
LOGIC	5
ORGANIZATION	3
PARAGRAPHING	6
CONCLUSION	3
DEVELOPMENT	6
SUBJECT/VERB	5
PRONOUN USAGE	5
PARALLEL STRUCT	5
ACTIVE/PASSIVE	6
IDIOMATIC USAGE	6
PUNCTUATION	5
VOCABULARY	5
DICTION LEVEL	6
DICTION PRECISION	3
LANGUAGE	4
SPELLING	6
NEATNESS	3
LEGIBILITY	2
INSTRUCTIONS	YES
COMPLETED	YES
LANGUAGE PROB	NO
STANDARD FORM	YES
LIT REFERENCE	YES
LIT QUOTATION	NO
ACCURACY	YES
INDENTATIONS	YES
CONTENT	CURRENT AFFAIRS AND HISTORY
ESSAY TYPE	OPINION
POLITICAL OR	LIBERAL
HANDWRITING	PRINTING
WORDS	278
PARAGRAPHS	4
PAGES	1.4

ECT 1990
CASE 121
BATCH 7760
SERIAL 0278

Those who exceed standards help others to clarify their own standards. Whether their actions be good or bad, this statement is true.

Coming from a family with strict and somewhat old traditional ways, I can relate to the statement of exceeding standards. As a young boy of the sixth grade, I grew up with the wrong crowd. These people I "tagged around" with were labeled best as the rebels. They were tough guys who wanted to grow up too fast, too soon. I watched and observed them. They cussed, stole, fought, etc. with other kids which, in their eyes, got them the respect and acceptance they were wanting. Their actions had caught my attention and that little attention they recieved from me had caught their eye. They asked me to be one of them. I felt proud and honored. They made me feel special.

As weeks went by, I got the reputation of my new found friends. I hadn't really done anything but tag along with them. One day we all saw a little kid selling candy from house to house. We knew he had money so we decided to take his money and candy. Doing this made my friends feel tough but all I had gained was a guilty conscience. I realized my situation and felt bad for the kid. I felt even more sorry for my friends knowing that they are going through life as a game and they were losing.

Their actions of exceeding standards caused me to think of "how far should this go." Others exceeding standards do help others clarify their own standards.

ECT 1990
CASE 121
BATCH 7760
SERIAL 0278

TOTAL HOLISTIC SCORE	17 (R1 = 4, R2 = 4, R3 = 5, R4 = 4)
PREDICTED	13.640
SAT-V	350
TSWE	44
SEX	MALE
ETHNIC/LANGUAGE	ASIAN/ENGLISH FIRST LANGUAGE
THESIS	6
STRATEGY	6
IDEAS	7
SUPPORT	5
TRANSITION	5
TONE	4
VARIETY	5
LOGIC	5
ORGANIZATION	6
PARAGRAPHING	5
CONCLUSION	6
DEVELOPMENT	6
SUBJECT/VERB	5
PRONOUN USAGE	6
PARALLEL STRUCT	6
ACTIVE/PASSIVE	6
IDIOMATIC USAGE	5
PUNCTUATION	6
VOCABULARY	6
DICTION LEVEL	6
DICTION PRECISION	4
LANGUAGE	4
SPELLING	6
NEATNESS	3
LEGIBILITY	3
INSTRUCTIONS	YES
COMPLETED	YES
LANGUAGE PROB	NO
STANDARD FORM	NO
LIT REFERENCE	NO
LIT QUOTATION	NO
ACCURACY	NOT DETERMINABLE
INDENTATIONS	YES
CONTENT	PERSONAL EXPERIENCE
ESSAY TYPE	PERSONAL
POLITICAL OR	NONE
HANDWRITING	CURSIVE
WORDS	286
PARAGRAPHS	4
PAGES	1.0

ECT 1990
CASE 127
BATCH 7764
SERIAL 0102

My brother was always one who wouldn't conform to the accepted norms of society. He always wanted to question authority and its foundation. At the tender age of five he would always try my mother's patience. Whether it was playing too rough or not following his teachers orders, he made it very difficult for my parents to control him. My parents thought it was just a phase that he would grow out of.

Imagine their surprise when he was sent home early in high school when he refused to do his science lab. Not only were my parents outraged but they didn't know what to do with him so they came to me for advice. I was a couple of years older than him and was the exact opposite. I was furious because of his behavior and just thought he did all these horrible things because he wanted attention.

That night, I went to his room to ask about what had happened earlier at school. We talked for a little over an hour. In that hour, I found out that his actions were deeper than I had imagined. He questioned authority so he could define himself. He wanted to ask why things are the way they are instead of just accepting them like I had been. I went to my room and thought about what he just said. He had not only defined himself, but also me in the process. By being opposites, he had shown me that my standards were different and that I shouldn't just accept everything that I was told.

ECT 1990
CASE 127
BATCH 7764
SERIAL 0102

TOTAL HOLISTIC SCORE	16 (R1 = 5, R2 = 4, R3 = 5, R4 = 2)
PREDICTED	10.939
SAT-V	510
TSWE	51
SEX	FEMALE
ETHNIC/LANGUAGE	BLACK/ENGLISH AND ANOTHER LANGUAGE FIRST LANGUAGES
THESIS	4
STRATEGY	5
IDEAS	5
SUPPORT	4
TRANSITION	4
TONE	5
VARIETY	5
LOGIC	2
ORGANIZATION	4
PARAGRAPHING	3
CONCLUSION	4
DEVELOPMENT	4
SUBJECT/VERB	5
PRONOUN USAGE	5
PARALLEL STRUCT	6
ACTIVE/PASSIVE	6
IDIOMATIC USAGE	5
PUNCTUATION	5
VOCABULARY	4
DICTION LEVEL	4
DICTION PRECISION	5
LANGUAGE	6
SPELLING	5
NEATNESS	3
LEGIBILITY	3
INSTRUCTIONS	YES
COMPLETED	NO
LANGUAGE PROB	NO
STANDARD FORM	NO
LIT REFERENCE	N0
LIT QUOTATION	NO
ACCURACY	NOT DETERMINABLE
INDENTATIONS	YES
CONTENT	PERSONAL EXPERIENCE
ESSAY TYPE	PERSONAL
POLITICAL OR	NONE
HANDWRITING	CURSIVE AND PRINTING
WORDS	263
PARAGRAPHS	3
PAGES	1.3

Appendix D3

Three Exemplars with Lower Holistic Scores than Predicted with Analytical Ratings and Other Data

ECT 1990
CASE 52
BATCH 7728
SERIAL 0268

When a person is seen doing something outrageous, some people laugh and cheer while others smirk with scorn. Whether with admiration or disdain, almost all of the observers judge the person to some degree. These people are unconsciously applying their standards to this person. The person's behavior may or may not effect a change in the audience's standards, which are also affected by observation of others' reactions.

I myself can understand this type of thought process because I have used it in a recent experience. This past summer, I participated in a five-week academic program. I was initially intimidated by the vast number of strange faces. This soon changed, however, as I met some very outrageous people. One guy stole pylons from a construction site and put them in his room. Another fellow kicked a hole in a wall and poured pepper in the halls. As I observed their actions, I thought they were funny. I know that they were doing things that are wrong, but I admired them for their rebeliousness and I soon began doing destructive things like them. My most memorable action was the blackening of an elevator. As I look back on these events, I can now see how others' outrageous behavior caused me to change my standards and also my own behavior. I was able to put aside my disdain and to appreciate the ridiculous humor of their actions. This change in me was partially brought about by the fact that other people also seemed to appreciate the deeds. In one sense, I can say that I altered my behavior to gain the approval of others after I realized their standards. In actuality, I do not approve or disapprove.

ECT 1990
CASE 52
BATCH 7728
SERIAL 0268

TOTAL HOLISTIC SCORE	20 (R1 = 4, R2 = 4, R3 = 6, R4 = 6)
PREDICTED SCORE	24.303
SAT-V	620
TSWE	60
SEX	MALE
ETHNIC/LANGUAGE	ASIAN/ENGLISH NOT FIRST LANGUAGE
THESIS	10
STRATEGY	8
IDEAS	10
SUPPORT	10
TRANSITION	10
TONE	8
VARIETY	10
LOGIC	10
ORGANIZATION	10
PARAGRAPHING	10
CONCLUSION	6
DEVELOPMENT	8
SUBJECT/VERB	10
PRONOUN USAGE	6
PARALLEL STRUCT	8
ACTIVE/PASSIVE	6
IDIOMATIC USAGE	10
PUNCTUATION	10
VOCABULARY	10
DICTION LEVEL	10
DICTION PRECISION	10
LANGUAGE	8
SPELLING	10
NEATNESS	3
LEGIBILITY	3
INSTRUCTIONS	YES
COMPLETED	NO
LANGUAGE PROB	NO
STANDARD FORM	NO
LIT REFERENCE	N0
LIT QUOTATION	NO
ACCURACY	NOT DETERMINABLE
INDENTATIONS	NO
CONTENT	PERSONAL EXPERIENCE
ESSAY TYPE	PERSONAL
POLITICAL OR	NONE
HANDWRITING	CURSIVE AND PRINTING
WORDS	285
PARAGRAPHS	2
PAGES	1.2

ECT 1990
CASE 180
BATCH 7800
SERIAL 0352

When dealing with society's "outrageous behavior," I (along with many others) find that you actually do reveal how far your tolerance will take you. You see, there are so many individuals who in this generation mastered or concepted their own line of morals and invented a new set of values. It is so different from the "old fashioned" days so to speak, that critics (you and I) can easy point the finger on today's generation in America.

Now and then I let my mother get her ten cents worth of thoughts by telling me that today kids our the worst. She's always preaching how we've somehow lost respect for elder's. My personal feelings being myself are, were taught and given the values and manners of our parents and what makes the one's who turn out bad or inferorate bad behavior is a source unknown.

Although, no matter if you are a child, a teenager, or an adult all of our limits will only take us so far. Both you and I know if someone were to give you trouble left and right, we only would put up with so much. Being older is doing it easier, because you have "earned" the right's of respect. Being young will take its time, but no matter what society will always have it's troubles, we must learn to cope with it regardless.

ECT 1990
CASE 180
BATCH 7800
SERIAL 0352

TOTAL HOLISTIC SCORE	10 (R1 = 2, R2 = 2, R3 = 3, R4 = 3)
PREDICTED SCORE	13.986
SAT-V	340
TSWE	34
SEX	FEMALE
ETHNIC/LANGUAGE	HISPANIC/ENGLISH FIRST LANGUAGE
THESIS	6
STRATEGY	6
IDEAS	4
SUPPORT	4
TRANSITION	6
TONE	6
VARIETY	7
LOGIC	4
ORGANIZATION	6
PARAGRAPHING	7
CONCLUSION	5
DEVELOPMENT	6
SUBJECT/VERB	7
PRONOUN USAGE	6
PARALLEL STRUCT	6
ACTIVE/PASSIVE	7
IDIOMATIC USAGE	6
PUNCTUATION	6
VOCABULARY	4
DICTION LEVEL	4
DICTION PRECISION	5
LANGUAGE	5
SPELLING	5
NEATNESS	2
LEGIBILITY	3
INSTRUCTIONS	YES
COMPLETED	NO
LANGUAGE PROB	NO
STANDARD FORM	NO
LIT REFERENCE	NO
LIT QUOTATION	NO
ACCURACY	NOT DETERMINABLE
INDENTATIONS	YES
CONTENT	PERSONAL EXPERIENCE
ESSAY TYPE	OPINION
POLITICAL OR	NONE
HANDWRITING	PRINTING
WORDS	228
PARAGRAPHS	3
PAGES	1.10

ECT 1990
CASE 189
BATCH 7804
SERIAL 0064

In certain cases, I agree that those who go beyond accepted standards help us to clarify our own standards. But sometimes outrageous behavior is not acceptable. In this essay, I will try to support my reasons why outrageous behavior is sometime favorable and other times unfavorable.

First, I will give examples to support the quotation. Imagine, if we all were satisfied with the conditions in New York City then I think it is ridiculous to believe. Someone must speak up and lead the people to make it a better place to live in. For an example, in the 1960's, Martin Luther King rebel against discrimination of black people. Then I believe that this action was necessary for the benefit of the people. Another example was the court case Brown vs. the Board of Education. The action to challenge the government for what is right and wrong help change our standards. Thus, it is acceptable. Another example is when the teacher makes mistakes, it is our responsibility to question the teacher. If no action was taken, then the students will learn the wrong things.

Secondly, I will discuss why sometime it is not acceptable.

Hitler outrageous way to rise to power was an evil intention to the world. The use of force and aggression to gain territory and powers will only upset the people. Any from of retaliation and selfish acts can not be justified.

ECT 1990
CASE 189
BATCH 7804
SERIAL 0064

TOTAL HOLISTIC SCORE	9 (R1 = 3, R2 = 2, R3 = 2, R4 = 2)
PREDICTED SCORE	12.497
SAT-V	440
TSWE	35
SEX	MALE
ETHNIC/LANGUAGE	ASIAN/ENGLISH NOT FIRST LANGUAGE
THESIS	6
STRATEGY	4
IDEAS	6
SUPPORT	7
TRANSITION	4
TONE	6
VARIETY	6
LOGIC	5
ORGANIZATION	6
PARAGRAPHING	6
CONCLUSION	5
DEVELOPMENT	5
SUBJECT/VERB	4
PRONOUN USAGE	6
PARALLEL STRUCT	6
ACTIVE/PASSIVE	5
IDIOMATIC USAGE	5
PUNCTUATION	4
VOCABULARY	3
DICTION LEVEL	3
DICTION PRECISION	3
LANGUAGE	6
SPELLING	6
NEATNESS	3
LEGIBILITY	3
INSTRUCTIONS	YES
COMPLETED	NO
LANGUAGE PROB	NO
STANDARD FORM	YES
LIT REFERENCE	NO
LIT QUOTATION	NO
ACCURACY	YES
INDENTATIONS	YES
CONTENT	HISTORY
ESSAY TYPE	DIDACTIC
POLITICAL OR	NONE
HANDWRITING	CURSIVE AND PRINTING
WORDS	234
PARAGRAPHS	4
PAGES	1.0

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